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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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O 161134Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 659

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 705

NODIS

DEPT PASS USDEL SECRETARY'S AIRCRAFT; PASS WHITE HOUSE;
FOR THE SECRETARY FROM LEWIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PGOV EG IS US
SUBJ: DAYAN ON SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

1. IN THE COURSE OF MY MEETING WITH DAYAN ON JANUARY 13, HE SOMEWHAT GINGERLY RAISED THE ISSUE OF SETTLEMENTS IN AN APPARENT EFFORT TO CLARIFY THE RECORD FURTHER ABOUT HIS ASSURANCES IN WASHINGTON TO THE PRESIDENT. (PREVIOUS EXCHANGES WITH BEGIN ON THIS TOPIC TOOK PLACE WHILE DAYAN WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE TWO OF THEM HAVE DISCUSSED THIS "MISUNDERSTANDING" EXTENSIVELY SINCE DAYAN'S RETURN FROM ITALY.) HE MAY RAISE THIS WITH YOU IN CAR EN ROUTE TO JERUSALEM, SO WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU WERE BRIEFED.

2. DAYAN STRESSED THAT HE HAD NO QUARREL WITH THE ACCURACY OF THE EXCERPTS FROM OUR TRANSCRIPT IN THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER WITH RESPECT TO THE PLAN FOR ESTABLISHING NEW SETTLEMENTS IN MILITARY CAMPS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT THE GOI WOULD RESTRICT NEW SETTLERS TO MILITARY CAMPS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD EMPHASIZED THAT ONLY SIX ADDITIONAL SETTLEMENTS
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WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE, AND THAT "WE WOULD NOT TURN THEM INTO CIVILIAN CAMPS FOR ABOUT A YEAR." HE SAID HE WAS SURE THIS WAS HOW THE "FOR A YEAR" PHRASE WAS USED.

3. IN REFERRING TO THE MOST RECENT GOI DECISION TO ESTABLISH FOUR NEW SETTLEMENTS IN MILITARY ENCAMPMENTS,

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HE SAID "IT IS JUST AS I TOLD THE PRESIDENT...WE
ARE KEEPING OUR WORD ON THIS," HE ALSO CITED THE CABINET
DECISION TWO WEEKS AGO NOT TO ESTABLISH ANY ADDITIONAL
NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO KEEP ITS COMMITMENT.

4. IN SPECULATING ABOUT THE MUDDLE RELATING TO WHETHER
HIS ASSURANCES OVER NEW SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY HAD BEEN
INTENDED TO COVER A PERIOD OF A YEAR OR ONLY THROUGH THE
END OF 1977, DAYAN OFFERED THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL
EXPLANATION. HE SAID AT THE TIME OF THE CONVERSATION
HE HAD "NOT BEEN THINKING OF JANUARY OR ANY OTHER MONTH"
AS A CUT OFF DATE FOR HIS ASSURANCES. BUT HE REMINDED
ME THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD KEPT REPEATING THAT HE HOPED
GENEVA WOULD BE CONVENED BY THE END OF THE YEAR. IT
WAS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS EFFORTS TO REASSURE THE
PRESIDENT THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT UNDERTAKE ANY NEW
CIVILIAN RPT CIVILIAN SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY DURING THE
PRE-GENEVA PERIOD THAT DAYAN THOUGHT THE CONFUSION HAD
BEEN CREATED.

5. I BRACED HIM HEAD ON BY ASKING WHY IT HAD BEEN
NECESSARY TO ANNOUNCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ANY NEW
SETTLEMENTS AT SUCH A DELICATE MOMENT. DAYAN ANSWERED
BY RECALLING THAT ONE OF THE PRINCIPLE ELEMENTS OF THE
ISRAELI SELF-RULE PLAN PERMITS CONTINUED SETTLEMENT
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ACTIVITY IN THE WEST BANK. IT REMAINS ISRAELI POLICY,
HE SAID, TO ESTABLISH NEW SETTLEMENTS THERE--THOUGH NOT
IN SINAI. HE ALSO CITED DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS AS AN
ADDITIONAL FACTOR. HE REFERRED TO WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED
AS A "REAL CHANGE" IN THE MOOD OF THE POPULATION AND
CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE KNESSET (HE CITED KATZ AND
SHARON AS EXAMPLES), BROUGHT ABOUT BY A CONVICTION THAT
BEGIN HAS GONE TOO FAR TOO FAST IN MAKING CONCESSIONS.
HE POINTED OUT THAT HE HAD VOTED FOR THE NEW SETTLEMENTS
HIMSELF, AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT SETTLEMENTS SHOULD NOT
MATTER SO LONG AS NO LAND IS EXPROPRIATED AND MILITARY CAMPS
ARE CHOSEN AS SITES.

6. I ASKED IF HE HAD ANY IDEA WHAT THE EFFECT WAS ON
THE EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP RESULTING FROM THE CONSTANT
HARPING BY ISRAEL RADIO ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY
IN THE RAFAH AREA. THE REPORTS WERE CONFUSING AND
EXAGGERATED AND WERE COMPOUNDING ISRAEL'S NEGOTIATING
PROBLEMS. THE EGYPTIANS SIMPLY COULD NOT UNDERSTAND
WHAT WAS GOING ON. DAYAN NODDED IN SILENT UNDERSTANDING
AND RATHER FEEBLY OBSERVED THAT HE HAD TRIED TO HELP
THE SITUATION BY HIS COMMENTS WHILE IN ITALY. I TOLD

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HIM THAT WE HAD APPRECIATED HIS ROMAN EFFORTS, BUT
I REMINDED HIM THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD HEARD MORE
CLEARLY BEGIN'S REMARKS BEFORE THE HERUT CENTRAL
COMMITTEE LAST WEEKEND. I URGED THAT A CEASEFIRE
PROMPTLY BE INVOKED CONCERNING SETTLEMENT TALKS, TO
WHICH DAYAN AGAIN NODDED ASSENT, ALBEIT SOMEWHAT
UNCOMFORTABLY.

7. COMMENT: AS I HAVE SIGNALED YOU SEVERAL TIMES IN THE
LAST FEW DAYS, THIS ISSUE KEEPS RUBBING AGAINST A VERY
SENSITIVE AREA OF THE BEGIN-DAYAN POLITICAL ANATOMY. I
AM CERTAIN DURING YOUR FORTHCOMING VISIT YOU WILL
ALTERNATELY BE EXPOSED TO SOUNDS OF EMBARRASSMENT FROM
DAYAN AND MORTIFIED SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM BEGIN ABOUT
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THIS SUBJECT. AT THIS POINT I CAN OFFER NOTHING FURTHER
SAVE SYMPATHY FOR YOU. LEWIS

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